



April 19, 2023

Hall of Fame: *Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field*
American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, KY 40206

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to highly recommend Dr. Marc Maurer for the prestigious Hall of Fame: *Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field* Award. Dr. Maurer has dedicated his life to creating opportunities for blind people by helping them to think more highly of themselves in ways that are consistent with a balanced and healthy self-image. Of course, more than self-image is required to excel in a society that too often erects barriers that can only be addressed through collective action.

After graduating cum laude from the University of *Notre Dame* in 1974, my friend and colleague earned a doctorate of juris prudence from the University of Indiana in 1977. He has worked for the Civil Aeronautics Board, has run his own law practice, and eventually was elected to serve as the President of the National Federation of the Blind, a position he held for twenty-eight years. He is a member of the bar in Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Maryland, and the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Throughout his career, Dr. Maurer faced and overcame numerous challenges with unwavering determination and a clear vision of what needed to be accomplished. He dramatically demonstrated his commitment to place the blind in a significant role in research about and the education of the blind when he spearheaded the raising of twenty million dollars to build what is now known as the Jernigan Institute and then created a fundraising infrastructure to operate its programs. In addition to this remarkable achievement, Dr. Maurer also built and maintained a technology center designed for blind people to evaluate and experience innovative devices before purchasing them. This initiative exemplifies his ongoing commitment to empowering the blind community and equipping them with the tools needed to thrive and to make their own decisions about the technology that will assist them.

Under Dr. Maurer's leadership, the National Federation of the Blind reached new heights, as evidenced by his instrumental role in the development of the Blind Driver Challenge and the sponsorship of blind athletes in sailing, mountain climbing, and driving. These initiatives have not only broadened the horizons for blind people but have also reshaped the public perception of what it is possible for blind people to do. He was very aware of the tremendous advantages that would come from success in these activities; likewise, he understood that moving forward with them meant suffering the consequences of the reversals that would occur should any of them fail and result in injury or death. He said, "If we fail, we will be told we should have known better, but we know that every significant opportunity to expand the boundaries for blind people comes with a risk. We must be brave enough to embrace that risk and never be the ones who limit what blind people want and believe they can do." By urging the organization he headed to take these calculated risks, he has inspired countless individuals to strive to reach greater heights.

Dr. Maurer's global impact is equally noteworthy, having coordinated the Federation's hosting of the World Blind Union in 2016 and advocating for blind people around the world. His eloquence and powerful speeches on the topic of blindness have earned him numerous recognitions in "Vital Speeches of the Day" as well as an invitation to speak at Oxford in 2000. He addressed the Library of Congress in 2010 and the First International Conference on Technology for Helping People with Special Needs (ICTHP-2013) at the Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I also know at a deep level the personal character of Marc Maurer. I have spent hundreds of hours talking with him, sharing perspectives about how to advance the blind in society, and discussing our unique struggles of life. What you may not know from his extensive public record is the extraordinary heart of generosity and love that he has shared with countless people, including me. It shines through his work with the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults to make thousands of free Braille books available to blind children. It informs the advice, support, and hope he has given individuals like me in times of great need. I fully believe that this committee would be hard pressed to find any living human who has, through his very personal actions, supported more blind individuals one-on-one while at the same time making significant contributions to the entire blind community.

Marc Maurer has set an unparalleled standard of excellence in the field of blindness, not for his own elevation but to inspire and challenge others. His love and unwavering passion for serving the blind community provide the endless energy, creativity, and strength he brings to every initiative he undertakes. One such initiative was facilitating the minting of a coin in honor of Louis Braille in 2009 and even getting two of these coins aboard the space shuttle. His groundbreaking efforts with refreshable Braille and tactile graphics devices as well as innovative exploration of new avenues for accessing print, photos, and other media will continue to have an impact long into the future.

It is with great confidence and admiration that I recommend Dr. Marc Maurer for the Hall of Fame: *Leaders and Legends* of the *Blindness Field* award. His tireless efforts, dedication, and vision have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless blind people worldwide, and he is truly deserving of this recognition.

Thank you for considering my recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara Loos".

Barbara Loos, President
American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults

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